

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
2	5/12/2016 7:54:40	I think both the Budget Coordinating Group and the Joint Capital Planning Committee are excellent examples of collaborative leadership that allow citizen engagement but move projects and work FORWARD with and by people who are knowledgeable and focused on the whole of the town, not just one thing. The community can then see how they voted, what they supported and understand the process. There is strong value in a professional town manager, similar to having a school superintendent and chief of police and fire.
3	5/12/2016 12:24:56	I want a Town government without Open Government, that is free to negotiate deals behind closed doors on a closed Yahoo listserv, like Town Meeting.
4	5/12/2016 12:26:03	I want a Town Government that is immune to conflict of interest, under MGL 268a, like Town Meeting.
5	5/12/2016 12:26:47	I want a Town government without fiduciary duty, like Town Meeting.
6	5/12/2016 12:27:18	I want a Town government where elected officials are free to use their elected office to influence a state-mandated board for personal reasons, like Town Meeting.
7	5/12/2016 12:51:27	N/A
8	5/12/2016 15:30:13	I think the various boards: Select, School, Finance, Zoning, JCPC, BCG, Library, etc, work hard and generally do a good job. I think there are a ton of options for the public to weigh in on many, many meetings that take place.
9	5/12/2016 18:37:56	One signature means a low bar to run for Town Meeting. Many opportunities to serve on meaningful committees. Many people engaged in the process. Town staff respects work of committees.

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
10	5/12/2016 22:05:24	I like that my involvement in Town Meeting and committees provides an ongoing education that broadens my thinking, tolerance and sense of connection to community at every level, that is greater than my likes and dislikes.
11	5/13/2016 13:53:41	1.Ease of participation - Anyone can participate. Two votes can elect someone to Town Meeting. There are many openings on town permitting boards and committees. 2.Resistance to careless change - Careless change is rare because the system as it operates is biased to inaction. Gravity lies with those opposed to change.
12	5/16/2016 21:10:56	Passion, enthusiasm, and dedication from those involved.

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
13	5/18/2016 8:51:00	
14	5/18/2016 10:12:30	Professionalism of Town staff. Dedication of Select Board and many other town boards and committees. There is an incredible talent pool here.

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
15	5/22/2016 12:18:06	Town Meeting
16	5/27/2016 16:08:51	Town meeting (and in truth all of Amherst's many governing and administrative entities) aspires to consensus, which is a laudable, if unrealistic, goal. This aspiration arises from the desire to foster community.
17	6/1/2016 20:37:13	
18	6/3/2016 11:45:36	I very much like and believe in direct citizen participation in town government and value the tradition of town meeting that I believe has been instrumental in keeping Amherst a great place to live despite some challenges that we need to overcome as a town.



	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
19	6/4/2016 9:43:54	
20	6/6/2016 14:50:21	Openness. Good citizen participation

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
21	6/12/2016 16:12:21	The ability of provide opportunities for our residents, with good jobs and places to live.

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
22	6/13/2016 10:30:06	

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
23	6/19/2016 10:34:30	

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
24	7/9/2016 12:06:31	
25	7/17/2016 22:21:00	
26	9/1/2016 15:41:19	Very little

	A	B
1	Timestamp	What aspects of Amherst's current approach to government do you like?
27	9/1/2016 15:50:32	Professional management
28	9/7/2016 20:09:42	The closed Town Meeting listserv, where our elected representatives negotiate behind closed doors

1 What aspects do you think could be improved?

2 Accountable citizen leaders who can make time in their lives to focus on civic issues would serve our community better than just volunteers who happen to have time (and resources) to show up and engage in various meetings. Year round regular focus on all the issues that come up, not just twice a year legislative focus that puts a huge burden on the town staff and the committee members that participate. Spread out the work through out the year and build a form of government that can work proactively on issues, and not just be reactive to problems. Build a structure that can represent our community needs to the area institutions and State leadership so that Amherst is not overlooked in broad conversation about issues that will affect us.

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7 A more inclusive and representational system

8 Get rid of town meeting - it is too large, to long and too uninformed (compared to the boards cited above). Alternative: make it MUCH smaller, like 3 members from each district for total of 30.

9 No one has been provided the resources to work consistently and diligently increase diversity of age and ethnicity in either elected or appointed office. Not enough people apply for appointed office. People seem unwilling to compete if they think someone else is going to apply. A significant number of Town Meeting members simply do not take their responsibilities seriously, as they have next to no communication with neighbors in their precinct or townwide except to oppose certain projects, pay little to no attention to the year round process of governing our community, refuse to read the materials provided them weeks in advance, and go so far as appearing to think they are only responsible for choosing which dramatic speech on the floor of Town Meeting is that night's best performance. Town Meeting is supposed to be for action, not for the annual airing of grievances. Some Town Meeting members, and apparently the voters, are indifferent to their regular absence from sessions. Town Meeting Precincts could easily organize to work on neighborhood concerns, and bring them to the appropriate committees and staff, but choose not to do so. Town Meeting Precincts could easily choose to provide year round education to their Town Meeting members and neighbors, but instead have only a few precinct meetings very late in the process that are typically a combination of 1) if you've already read the material, you're being bored by someone reading it to you, and 2) passionate arguments about why Town staff and elected and appointed officials are wrong; this serves no one. The current Town Government Act ensures the Town Manager has all the power and none of the accountability; it's ridiculous to believe five part time volunteer elected officials who see the Town Manager once a week at most can insist the community's policy direction actually be carried out by one highly paid professional and his staff. Appointed and elected officials also have to carefully choose their battles with staff because without some staff support absolutely nothing can get done. Increasing the number of "public hearings" where a very limited self selected group of people privileged to have that kind of time on their hands insist on their point of view to the volunteers actually doing the work week after week and already listening to the community week after week, while that same self selected group refuses to serve on appointed boards or get elected to townwide office, is a sham that needs to be put to rest sooner rather than later. Most residents of Amherst simply do not have the time to serve in elected office, whether townwide or Town Meeting, due to the time commitment involved, so a form of government that plans for the involvement of 240 elected Town Meeting members is by its very nature going to have a very thin pool of people who currently are indeed privileged enough to have both the time and the means to devote so many hours to multiple Town Meeting sessions as well as preparation. People with very real struggles to get food on the table and/or care for their family members cannot participate in this form of democracy.

1	What aspects do you think could be improved?
10	I trust that any 'improvements' will not be influenced by or imposed on citizens that have given their time, energy, experience and expertise voluntarily, by those who receive a salary for their work, such as consultants.
11	1.Expanded opportunities for participation - People without the time to participate in Town Meeting could be given a more meaningful opportunity to participate, both by their votes and by being able to relate policies and decisions to identifiable individuals. 2.More flexible process – Currently, town committees deliver heavily worked-over warrant articles to Town Meeting, which approves those articles with little or no change. Or votes them down. It's an inflexible process, biased against change.
12	It's archaic, slow, and lacks representation from people of color and people under retirement age.



1 What aspects do you think could be improved?

From: "leaveit6@yahoo.com [amhersttownmeeting]"

Date: 17 May 2016 10:35:20 -0700

To: <amhersttownmeeting@yahoogroups.com>

Subject: [AmhTownMtg] Attendance: can anyone reach out to their fellow precinct members? Also, 8 elected vacancies

Attendance at Town Meeting is a tricky issue.

Some folks think it's perfectly fine that people take a vacation or sabbatical during most of Annual Town Meeting, but others call it not taking their elected role seriously.

Obviously there are once in a lifetime opportunities.

Obviously most seats are not heavily contested.

Obviously elected Town Meeting members become ill, have to take care of suddenly ill family members, or suddenly must travel for work.

We should not be mean to people who aren't showing up, because we should not be mean to people.

Plus we don't know why they aren't showing up, and there is no rule about good excuses vs poor ones. ;

But we *could* be kind enough to treat our precincts like neighborhood associations, reaching out to our missing members to see if they are ill, need a ride, need more information, etc.

Here's the attendance list:

<http://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/34760>

We currently have only 246 Town Meeting members out of 254 (240 elected plus 14 exofficio), so in addition to absences, we are actually short eight elected Town Meeting members. Consider recruiting to fill the ranks?

13 Take care,

14 Representative Town Meeting is neither democratic nor representative. It is a tyranny of a minority. It is discouraging that a consistent few can block the work of professionals and volunteers out-of-hand. Our current form of government is unworkable and we are wasting time and huge amounts of tax dollars (staff and consultant time devoted to projects that are shot down).

1 What aspects do you think could be improved?

15 Select Board, A new FAIR (unbiased) Moderator, Board of Health, Finance Committee, Planning Board

16 There is little direct accountability and that which exists is unclear and difficult to exercise. Town government is sprawling and diffuse; the purviews of boards and commissions and authorities and committees can seem duplicative and overlapping. It can be intimidating to navigate.

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- Town meeting could be downsized to allow for more competitive races and more involved candidates
- All votes should be electronic and recorded for precinct residents to know how TM members voted and if they held true to their campaign platforms. Residents would then be informed with data as to whether they'd like to vote for a candidate again or someone else
- Attendance records of TM should be recorded so residents know if the person they voted for actually participates. Again, giving residents important data
- Town meeting should meet more frequently such as on a quarterly basis or even every other month for an evening or 2
- More Boards (such as the Planning Bd, ZBA etc) should have members elected, not appointed to promote independent unbiased thinking

	C
1	What aspects do you think could be improved?
19	
20	More elective offices, such as Planning Board and Finance Committee

1 What aspects do you think could be improved?

21 Fiduciary duty for all branches of govt, especially Town Meeting

1 What aspects do you think could be improved?

1 What aspects do you think could be improved?

1 What aspects do you think could be improved?

24

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26 Centralize leadership ... you know, like a mayor.

1 What aspects do you think could be improved?

27 Representative Town Meeting no longer works for a community this big. It's too cumbersome and slow, Town Meeting members don't always come prepared, and they are definitely not representative of the population

28 A town government that does not work to get our employees fired, and tries to ruin their careers.



	D
1	What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?
2	Financial; matching our expectations to actual revenue. Engagement; citizen involvement is getting more and more difficult under this form of volunteer government. How will the children that grow up here be able to afford to live here, let alone "volunteer" to be involved? Where will our children who grow up here live? Our housing stock is anemic when you look for entry level single or even family housing.
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7	A small group of people who don't represent the diversity of our community have a lot of power to make decisions that affect all of us
8	High tax rate - not so much that it is high, but gaining a clear understanding of why it is high. Is it high for good reasons or not? We guess, but really don't know for sure - need simple presentation (3-6 pages) on that for the average voter.
9	<p>A small but vocal number of residents believe they got theirs years ago and do not need to share this beautiful, safe, community, so they are unwilling to have additional housing of any kind built anywhere. A number of residents are unwilling to consider the changing demographics of Western Massachusetts and the United States of America in terms of birth rates and the demise of the traditional middle class, as well as fully facing what can be obtained online and what can be obtained in person. Some residents simply cannot accept the very simple math that in 2016 a yarn shop that was getting reduced rent cannot survive in a town with this number of residents and this number of tourists. A number of residents are struggling to stay in this high cost community and cannot penetrate the obscure system of committees and Town Meeting to have their needs addressed as they see them, rather than as others imagine them to be. People graduating from college cannot make a high enough salary in this area to be able to live in this area given their student loan debt load. High property taxes continue to make retirees house poor without enough downsizing alternatives; even if everyone could afford Applewood, Applewood couldn't serve all of them. We talk a lot about racism and classism, but we aren't able to do nearly enough about it. Very few residents or staff hold truly conservative fiscal or social values, but some self appointed residents treat everyone on staff and in elected and appointed office as though they are not as magnificently liberal as they are, which of course results in distrust that plays out over and over in every arena. In addition to increased negotiated contributions by the private colleges, we also need additional revenue sources, including a broader variety of commercial property taxes, so that we can freely spend all the social services money we want to spend. People in the low middle cannot qualify for free or reduced food or LSSE program reductions but also cannot afford to participate. As our community continues its "dumbbell" trend with more multi generational (vs temporary college student) poor people and rich people with fewer and fewer in between, nuisance behavior as well as crime is becoming a larger concern than we have had to face in the past. People are beginning to get angry and frustrated about the number of mentally ill people accosting them on the street, especially because we truly believe we want to provide resources for all people and do indeed want our seasonal homeless shelter to be behavior based rather than "dry." More information is available online than ever before, but this has also resulted in higher expectations for both speedy response as well as transparency without sufficient resources to provide either. Our community cannot easily be divided into either precincts or wards given both the lack of cultural touchstones (unlike say Northampton where wards have some historic meaning) as well as the actual nature of off campus student housing being much more prevalent in some areas than others, and no amount of adjustment within the rules imposed by the Commonwealth makes running for office in precinct 3 the same as running in precinct 8.</p>

	D
1	What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?
10	An unpredictable world is a permanent challenge that must be faced in every community under every form of government. However it is not necessary to pick up every gauntlet that is thrown down, with imagination and daring many can be turned inside out to benefit rather than harm.
11	1.Fiscal – It's already expensive to live here. What will be the short-, medium-, and long-term living cost effects of expensive capital projects coming up and the huge unfunded liabilities, which I think we're pretty much ignoring? 2.Housing – How will we house students, older people, and even perhaps young families on a town housing footprint that is small and getting smaller as more land is added every year to conservation status?
12	

1 What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?

Regarding attendance, currently, attendance is posted in a non-searchable pdf file by the Town Clerk. In this pdf, attendance is indicated by a graphic checkmark, which will not convert to any data, either as text in any available pdf reader software at the highest professional level, or using expensive optical character recognitive software. Reading attendance data is a tedious task that must be done by hand. Last year, after the first meeting of Town Meeting, I spent a morning at Rao's transcribing attendance data, manually, which I then posted online and on the table at the back of Town Meeting.

I received several criticisms of this document, which one might consider public information:

1) The Moderator received complaints from members who felt threatened by the document and he instructed me that this would not be allowed.

2) A fellow on facebook said his wife is a nurse and when she gets called in, he has to stay home with the kids. He said that if it became known that they did not attend, they could lose their jobs and their house. He said their children would be shunned and ostracized in school.

3) I, personally, was stalked by a Town Meeting member who went to my landlord at my apartment and to the landlord at my place of business, making statements that could be construed as someone trying to get me evicted. Eighteen people with families depend on me for a place to work, we could all lose our jobs, I am serious. This person outlined these activities on the Town Meeting listserv, which is private, not public, so I can't show you the text.

13 -----

14 Managing change in a way that ensures thoughtful growth - better housing for all - zoning that encourages areas of density and a mechanism for engaging UMass and Colleges more fully in community life. Making our downtown and village centers thrive with housing, office and retail. Providing opportunities for talented folks (tech, artists, etc.) to live and work in Amherst.

1 What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?

15 Getting a fair town meeting process that is not ruled by the various boards and a moderator who no longer meets (as he does now) with the board members prior to the meetings to set agendas - in other words designing an uncorrupt process under which town meeting can thrive (as it does in other communities)

16 Consensus is a noble aspiration but consensus - by definition - requires everyone to agree. More often than not, the process - in a vain attempt to elicit agreement from everyone - grants veto power to small constituencies, sometimes as small as one. This ability of a single person, or a neighborhood, to gum up the works, to scuttle a solution which might be best for the aggregate community even though it is not best for them, creates a singular veto power which is too often wielded. Amherst, in appeasing all, often settles on sub-optimal solutions.

17

Amherst needs to be able to stand up to big money influencing politics and other decisions (such as rezoning in residential neighborhoods to build dorms) and instead, back the residents of Amherst. And not just those who live in more affluent neighborhoods but all residential neighborhoods need protection from development.

18 I'd also like the town to look into some sort of rent control to promote the movement of families back to Amherst as many developers/ landlords rent their properties at prices well above what any middle class family could afford to pay. A neighbor of mine rents his houses out for \$2,500 each. Only students can afford this..and the students are being fleeced! Some people are making considerable profits on the backs of students while driving middle class families out of town at the same time. This does not benefit the town nor its residents. There is already enough high-end rental housing in Amherst. We do not need more. We need more low to moderately priced rental housing available to residents.

	D
1	What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?
19	
20	Development threats caused by UMass failure to adequately provide student housing



	D
1	What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?
21	Public confidence in the integrity of town government, specifically Town Meeting

1 What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?

1 What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?



	D
1	What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?
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25	
26	Getting things done, the homeless, adding a commercial tax base.

1 What do you see as key challenges facing Amherst?

27 Reliance on the residential property tax for almost all Town funding, making it difficult for people with low to moderate incomes to buy housing. Additional well-thought out commercial development, coupled with sensible zoning, can help with that.

28 Open Government does not exist in Amherst, as it currently is run

1 How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?

2 Designate a strong executive branch that is accountable to voters but also has power to make decisions and lead professional staff such as a town manager. Make this branch collaborate with all aspects of town; schools, fire, police, leisure, library etc so Town Wide view can be taken and sections don't operate in a silo.

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7 A mayor or city council government, or even an open rather than representational town meeting

8 Better analysis of budgets - answer why, not just what - and compare to prior years - what line items have changed and why? We do some of that, need to to more and consolidate into simple document.

9 We need to look at models that ensure both continuity and accountability. Continuity does not mean keeping things the same, but instead having things make sense as they develop over time, rather than whipsawing from one extreme to another every two years. Do not fall for the flawed premise that increased voter participation has anything to do with voter satisfaction or lack thereof; it's an American cultural problem that no democratic form of government can overcome. We could improve our current form of government by holding Town Meeting members accountable for their votes as well as their lack of preparation. It took years for the vocal minority to accept having their voting records made public after the Bulletin stopped having significant coverage, but the current acceptance of electronic voting shows progress can be made. We can't do much about lack of preparation with so many seats to fill yet so few residents who have the time to spend this many evenings listening to people grandstand, in addition to year round preparation for those speeches (yes, they are speeches, not dialog, nor conversation, and the vast majority of questions should have been answered elsewhere). As noted with the precinct lines observation above, however, having a smaller Town Meeting body than 240 guarantees nothing but that some \*more\* precincts will have actual contested elections and some will continue not to have contested elections; until the voters demand to vote for someone based on actual data rather than their perception of a nice neighbor, reducing the size from 240 to some lower number just makes participation for those without decades of name recognition impossible. Professional management is important with an organization this size, yet volunteer opinions will never overcome those of professional management that is not accountable to voters in the ballot box vs not getting some things passed at Town Meeting. The point of a reduced size of Town government is not to make it more competitive, it's to make it more nimble and able to reflect the will of the entire community, not just those with the means to participate in the current time-intensive process. The point is not to torture fewer people with the same process that no longer meets our community's needs in 2016, the point is to have a system of community governance that enables a far greater number of residents to have significant input in their everyday lives.

	E
1	How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?
10	Government IS the People. People make better decisions when they feel safe enough not to conform with the majority or prevalent view and express their own unique perspective. The people of Amherst do that through representative Town Meeting. There is no better way.
11	1.Shift from the current participation-based model to a more representative model, so that voters who are unable or do not wish to participate in committees and Town Meeting can have a meaningful engagement in Town government. 2.Shift away from group actions and responsibility to more focused, individual (representative) responsibility.
12	

1 How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?

People do not run for Town Meeting because they are afraid for their jobs and their homes, due to petty vindictiveness and fear of reprisals. They are afraid for their children. Once on, they are afraid to speak out or even attend controversial meetings. Any changes must place our elected officials above reproach. They must be subject to fiduciary duty, under penalty of law. They must not be immune to conflict of interest. They must not deal on a closed listserv, behind closed doors. And they must, like all over elected officials, be subject to the law when it comes to using their elected office to influence a state-mandated board for personal reasons.

13 -----

14 Either go back to Open Town meeting, change to a Mayoral - Council format or a Council-Town Manager format. If nothing else changes - term limit TM members - limit them to two-or-three - 2-year terms - and then require four years off TM before being allowed to come back on.

	E
1	How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?
15	Fire the current board members and moderator and hire elected officials to fill their seats.
16	Elect a government and vest them with the power to govern effectively and simply. If they are bad, or corrupted by their power or ineffectual or violate the community's ethos, throw them out and elect somebody new.
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18	See question #2

1 How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?

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20 Hmm. That's why we have a Charter Commission. It will be interesting to see what they recommend.

1 How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?

21 Town meeting members should not be free to use their elected position for personal financial gain, even just 'the appearance of'.



1 How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?

22 Make it easier to adopt state-mandated changes in zoning, so we do not lose state funding for roads again -- the way we lost \$4.5 million in state funding for Pine St (twice, according to John Musante). Money that ended up coming out of local services. And took 2 years longer because Sandy had to borrow the money on the bond market, funding from future projects, like the school(s).

1 How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?

	E
1	How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?
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25	
26	A Mayor and a small number of well-defined officials

1 How can we improve our Town government's ability to meet those challenges?

27 Eliminate Town Meeting, replace it with an elected council.

28 Give final say in all matters to those with fiduciary duty, who are subject to conflict of interest, and are accountable.

	F	G
1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
2	Right now my vote for various town meeting members and even other boards is not effective in giving me, the voter, an opportunity to voice my view for how we govern or vision for the future since there is no accountability for their actions once they are serving, i.e. following their votes and then voting to replace them if desired. Voter involvement in local elections reflects this problem, being very low.	Clare Bertrand
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7	I hope the charter commission will help us move forward with changing our current dysfunctional system	Claudia Canale-Parola
8	I did not know about this feedback from until I saw it on Facebook.	Richard Hood
9	The approach you are taking is exactly the right one: what do people want and need from their municipal government, instead of saying "mayor or Town Meeting." Too many people assume they know what "Town Meeting" and "mayor" mean for Amherst, but those two terms are used very differently across the 351 municipalities in our Commonwealth, much less across the USA. It's clear all forms of municipal government in the Commonwealth have significant flaws. We need to pick the least flawed model to both preserve and support the continuation of what we all love about Amherst. No one has to live in Amherst. We are here because we love this place.	

	F	G
1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
10	I made an exception to my usual behavior by responding to this questionnaire	Melissa Perot
11	There is no such thing as a perfect organization. There is a lot that is good in our approach, but I think it's a little bit of a black hole, knowable only by those who invest their very considerable (enormous) time in it. Within that black hole, it's a limited segment of the Amherst population that can or wishes to make that investment.	Tom Ehrgood
12	If we keep town meeting it should be smaller, candidates should need at least 10 signatures to get on the ballot, partners and spouses residing at the same address should not both be able to serve, and members of planning board, finance committee, etc should not be able to serve.	

	F	G
1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
13	<p>When I wrote to the State Ethics Commission, the Commissioner personally explained to me that the only way for Town Meeting to function under such legal ethical conditions would be by passing a bylaw in Town Meeting adopting them, because, under MGL 268a, Town Meeting is immune to ethical laws.</p> <p>Before you present a proposed Charter to the voters that includes a Town Meeting, of any shape or size, Town Meeting itself must adopt such a bylaw, making them subject, under penalty law, to the same ethics laws as all other elected officials.</p> <p>Otherwise, people who run for or serve on Town Meeting will continue to do so at risk to their jobs, house and children, and to the people who depend on them.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Kevin Collins (optional, please don't publish under fear of reprisal)</p>
14		Matt Blumenfeld, 335 Middle Street

	F	G
1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
15	<p>I was a town meeting member in another town in the eastern part of the state with a population (excluding the students) of about the same size as tax payers in Amherst. It worked very well but the majority of members did not decide on issues until they were brought forth to the town meeting floor. There were no precinct meetings prior to the town meeting (as there are in Amherst). Because of this, people were as neutral as possible coming in and could all get the same information to discuss and eventually vote. Having that equality of thought initially was very good for the respect granted each and every speaker. There was also no moderator pressuring the floor to get to a vote - as we have now in Amherst. If anything the moderator saw his role as facilitating as much discussion as possible, so that all people's points could be included in the decision process. There was no inclination to finish quick or start new topics late at night. Meetings were added as needed and topics were all given the time and fresh thought they deserved. The moderator was respectful of ALL people (including the elders) and did not meet with the various boards in town prior to the meeting (as does ours in Amherst). He was exemplary in carrying out his duties of neutrality and yet had a keen understanding of the needs of the floor and I believe that is the only way town meeting can work. I do NOT agree that town meeting needs to be smaller. NOR do I agree that the Select Board should be able to override Town Meeting votes. Town Meeting needs to stay as independent as possible, in order to work.</p>	Resident of Amherst - 10+ years
16	The fear of a smaller, responsive Amherst government being prone to corruption, or being the pocket of business is a straw foe and should be rejected. Amherst would not allow a corrupt government to function. I have more faith in my community than those who fear a such a possibility.	
17		
18	<p>Amherst is not as large a town as we think -- take out the 20K+ students living on and close to campus and you realize that Amherst is far from a city. Students also, for the most part stay clear of Amherst politics. I've asked many of the students that I work with if they participate in local politics/government (or if I could get them interested in participating) and they all say no, stating that their town is "UMass" and their government is the SGA. Knowing that, town meeting seems a very appropriate and effective form of government providing critically needed checks and balances to the other governing town bodies.</p> <p>Again thank you for all you are doing to come up with a sound proposal!</p>	Claudia Brown



	F	G
1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
	<p>Friends,</p> <p>During the Charter Review election, you may have heard it mentioned that Gov. Baker has a bill before the legislature (1) to streamline local governments across the Commonwealth, including eliminating charter petitions and giving the power to call a Charter Commission to the Select Board. The Amherst Petition to Review the Charter may be the last such petition in the state.</p> <p>Gov. Baker's bill, "An Act to Modernize Municipal Finance and Government" (2), is actually quite a comprehensive finance bill, with 241 parts. "Municipal Modernization" will require local governments to move much quicker than once-a-year meetings by the Legislative branch. Of the original 88 Representative Town Meetings, 31 remain, with four more before the voters next year. The principal reason for this shift is need to act faster than once a year. This bill should make that apparent.</p> <p>May I remind you that, as a state-mandated board, you have fiduciary duty, under penalty of law, "to protect present residents AND future residents" (my emphasis), not just 'the voters'. Especially, as regards technical changes to state law already in the pipeline, and the necessity for our town government to move faster than once a year, in response to far reaching changes in state law under the Municipal Modernization Act (3).</p> <p>Thank you for your effort and hard work.</p> <p>Kevin Collins Amherst</p> <p>LINKS:</p> <p>(1) Gov Baker's Press Release <a href="http://1.usa.gov/1sUrcTd">http://1.usa.gov/1sUrcTd</a></p> <p>(2) An Act to Modernize Municipal Finance and Government <a href="http://1.usa.gov/1TOhSHq">http://1.usa.gov/1TOhSHq</a></p> <p>(3) Municipal Modernization - Section by Section Summary - DOWNLOAD PDF <a href="http://1.usa.gov/20Z2yMh">http://1.usa.gov/20Z2yMh</a></p>	
19		Kevin Collins
20	Not yet	

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1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
	<p>Town Meeting recently considered Article 43: Open Government for Town Meeting, choosing to dismiss the article. The purpose of the article was to introduce Conflict of Interest ethical considerations to our legislative body, who have final say in all matters. The purpose of conflict of interest is to maintain the public's confidence in government by addressing the issue of "the appearance of conflict of interest".</p> <p>While half of our Town Meeting, those on committees and boards, are subject to conflict of interest, the other half is immune to conflict of interest under MGL 268a. Members who are Parties in Interest to specific, named parcels under consideration are free to use their elected position to influence voting on articles in which they have a direct financial stake. And others, who are on state-mandated boards, may not. For starters, not all Town Meeting members are equal.</p> <p>Under Zoning Definitions, MGL 40A, Sec 11, "Parties in Interest shall mean the petitioner, abutters, owners of land directly opposite on any public or private street or way, and abutters to the abutters within three hundred feet of the property line of the petitioner as they appear on the most recent applicable tax list." Under conflict of interest, anyone who falls under this definition could submit, in writing, why they feel they can be fair and dispel the appearance of conflict of interest.</p> <p>Town Meeting, however, chose to dismiss the issue of "the appearance of conflict of interest", even a non-binding, voluntary resolution. Further, as the sponsor of the article, I was blocked from the Town Meeting listserv, the private yahoo group for Town Meeting members, and my presentation did not appear on the listserv until after Town Meeting was over. Those who spoke to my article in Town Meeting were unable to get complete information, adding to the confusion. Is this fair? To the voters?</p> <p>The voters of Amherst have elected a Charter Review Commission. Let us hope that they have the wisdom to give us a choice in the matter of whether or not we have a Town Government with fiduciary duty, subject to conflict of interest. One that does not operate on a closed listserv behind the backs of the voters, free to use their elected position for personal financial gain -- even just "the appearance of".</p> <p>Kevin Collins</p>	
21	Amherst	Kevin Collins (optional)

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1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
22	<p>From Stan Rosenberg's facebook page, Meg, passage of S.2311, housing and sustainable development.</p> <p>Failure to adopt by Amherst would mean loss of state funding for roads, etc. As you proceed, please consider the effect of making zoning harder, not easier. Thanks.</p> <p>Here's a little video from Stan's website, I slowed it down, hope you like it.  <a href="https://youtu.be/P-FpAgzMV7Y">https://youtu.be/P-FpAgzMV7Y</a></p> <p>Full bill:  <a href="https://malegislature.gov/Bills/189/Senate/S2311">https://malegislature.gov/Bills/189/Senate/S2311</a></p> <p>Thank you for your hard work.</p> <p>Kevin  ---  Kevin Collins  409 Main St Ste 19  Amherst, MA 01002  413-256-8899</p>	<p>Kevin Collins  (optional)</p>

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1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
23	<p>before Town Meeting, haveing made full-banner headline on the Gazette. I sent in this letter to the editor, for your consideration.</p> <p>Dear Editor,</p> <p>Recently, Town Meeting considered Article 43: Open Government for Town Meeting, choosing to dismiss the article. The purpose of the article was to introduce Conflict of Interest ethical considerations to our legislative body, who have final say in all matters. The purpose of conflict of interest is to maintain the public's confidence in government by addressing the issue of "the appearance of conflict of interest".</p> <p>While half of our Town Meeting, those on committees and boards, are subject to conflict of interest, the other half is immune to conflict of interest under MGL 268a. Members who are Parties in Interest to specific, named parcels under consideration are free to use their elected position to influence voting on articles in which they have a direct financial stake. And others, who are on state-mandated boards, may not. For starters, not all Town Meeting members are equal.</p> <p>Under Zoning Definitions, MGL 40A, Sec 11, "Parties in Interest shall mean the petitioner, abutters, owners of land directly opposite on any public or private street or way, and abutters to the abutters within three hundred feet of the property line of the petitioner as they appear on the most recent applicable tax list." Under conflict of interest, anyone who falls under this definition could submit, in writing, why they feel they can be fair and dispel the appearance of conflict of interest, just to maintain the public's trust in government.</p> <p>Town Meeting, however, chose to dismiss the issue of "the appearance of conflict of interest", even a non-binding, voluntary resolution. Further, as the sponsor of the article, I was blocked from the Town Meeting listserv, the private yahoo group for Town Meeting members, and my presentation did not appear on the listserv until after Town Meeting was over. Those who spoke to my article in Town Meeting were unable to get complete information, adding to the confusion. Is this fair? To the voters?</p> <p>The voters of Amherst have elected a Charter Review Commission. Let us hope that they have the wisdom to give us a choice in the matter of whether or not we have a Town Government with fiduciary duty, subject to conflict of interest. One that does not operate on a closed listserv behind the backs of the voters, free to use their elected position for personal financial gain -- even just "the appearance of".</p>	Kevin Collins (optional)



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1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
24	<p>Cambridge has a interesting set-up. The city council elects one of its members as mayor, everyone gets a turn. It's called "Plan E".</p> <p>PLAN E: Government by a city council including a mayor elected from its number, and a city manager, with all elected bodies elected at large by proportional representation (from Chapter 43 of the Massachusetts General Laws)</p> <p><a href="https://www.cambridgema.gov/.../documents/p/planecharter">https://www.cambridgema.gov/.../documents/p/planecharter</a></p>	Kevin Collins (optional)
25	<p>We already have a Town Meeting. If voters want a Town Meeting, all they have to do is vote "no" on the ballot. End of story. Now, please, choose one:</p> <p>"Plan A", a city government and legislative body composed of the mayor and a city council, the councillors being elected at large.</p> <p>"Plan B", a city government and legislative body composed of a mayor and city council, the councillors being elected partly at large and partly from districts or wards of the city.</p> <p>"Plan C", a city government and legislative body composed of a mayor and commissioners as hereinafter specified.</p> <p>"Plan D", a city government and legislative body, to be known as the city council, composed of seven or nine members, one of whom shall be mayor and shall be the official head of the city, and an administrative officer, called the city manager.</p> <p>"Plan E", a city government and legislative body, to be known as the city council, composed of seven or nine members, one of whom shall be elected as mayor by and from such members and shall be the official head of the city, and an administrative officer, called the city manager; the members of the city council and the elective members of the school committee to be elected at large by proportional representation.</p> <p>"Plan F", a city government and legislative body composed of a mayor and a city council, the councillors being elected partly at large and partly from wards of the city, with the mayor and city councillors to be nominated in party primaries.</p>	
26		My name is not optional - Douglas Raybeck

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1	Any other thoughts or feedback you would like to provide?	Name (optional)
27	<p>Any charter should include provision for a professional manager, to ensure continuity and a high level of excellence among town employees. This has worked well for Amherst since the Town adopted a strong manager form of government in 1954. would be the right of the parties.</p> <p>9847 Re: [AmhTownMtg] Library: Statement for Director's evaluation, mostly about the Library's proposed demolition/expansion project</p> <p>Michael Burkart Today at 8:36 AM My mistake, I meant to send this only to Sarah. My apologies. Michael</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p> <p>Show message history</p> <p>&gt; Michael, &gt; This post is unacceptable and does not belong on this list serve. Whatever one thinks about the quality someone's work, this kind of vicious name calling should be out of bounds. You owe Sharon Sharry, and everyone on the list, an apology. I assume that the post wasn't intended to be public, but the best way to be decent in public is to be decent in private. Jim Oldham P5 &gt; PS This is intentionally public.</p> <p>On Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 10:23 AM, Michael Burkart maburk47@... [amhersttownmeeting] &lt;amhersttownmeeting@yahoogroups.com&gt; wrote: &gt;</p> <p>Good to know. I will pass that on if anyone asks. &gt; My feeling is that this will doom Sharry's career. I would be so shamed if I was talked about in these terms. I think town meeting will vote down the money request and her reputation will be irrevocably damaged. It's not like she didn't burn this on herself - treating the position as her private asset. &gt; Thank you for stopping this parasite. &gt; &gt; On Sep 7, 2016, at 10:00 AM, Sarah smckee57@... [amhersttownmeeting] &lt;amhersttownmeeting@yahoogroups.com&gt; wrote:</p> <p>Thanks, Michael. For the United States only, though.</p>	<p>Kay Moran</p> <p>Kevin Collins (optional)</p>
28	Sarah McKee	